

The New York Times

Founded in 1851

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1983

Letters

For a Course Change on Arms and Their Control

To the Editor:

Leslie Gelb reports that the Scowcroft Commission may recommend a significant departure from earlier Administration plans for a new ICBM, i.e., that some MX ICBM's should be deployed in existing silos, but that we should also deploy small ICBM's, designed to carry only single warheads (news story Feb. 8).

I have thought for some time that a move to single-warhead missiles could help resolve our most difficult strategic problem — fears concerning the theoretical vulnerabilities of U.S. ICBM's to a Soviet first strike.

Single-warhead missiles would be less profitable targets for the Soviets than MIRV'd missiles. Moreover, it would require a great many single-warhead ICBM's to pose a first-strike threat against Soviet ICBM silos. Single-warhead ICBM's could be deployed in a variety of mobile modes, if that were necessary to prevent them from becoming targets. But they might also be deployed in fixed silos if suitable changes in Soviet ICBM deployments were to be worked out through arms control.

This last point is crucial. The proper context for this, or any other deploy-

ment, is a clear and sensible arms-control initiative. If the Administration hopes to put together a durable consensus in the Congress, and in the country,

ship between those weapons and our arms-control objectives has been made understandable in a manner that has so far eluded this Administration.

The Administration's efforts have beretofore been directed toward deploying new weapons that would put Soviet ICBM's at theoretical risk, just as ours are currently at theoretical risk — meanwhile, exempting from reductions new categories of weapons, such as the cruise missile, where the U.S. has an advantage.

Such an approach offers the prospect of mutual vulnerability, mutual instability and mutual fear. That objective is strategically unwise and has become politically unsupportable. In presenting any new approach to weapons, the Administration must display more restraint in its planning and much more restraint in its arms-control efforts.

The overall objective of U.S. policy for nuclear weapons and for arms control must be to combine the two in a manner which points us toward a strategically stable relationship with the Soviet Union, at sharply and progressively reduced numbers of weapons.

ALBERT GORE JR.

Member of Congress, 4th Dist., Tenn.
Washington, Feb. 10, 1983



in support of a new proposal for strategic weapons, it must come to grips with political as well as technical realities.

The country wants arms control to be pursued vigorously. It is prepared to support new strategic weapons only with reluctance and only if the relation-

midterm
not MX

not Scowcroft
package!

The "package" is the arms control
context of our time & Dene Post!